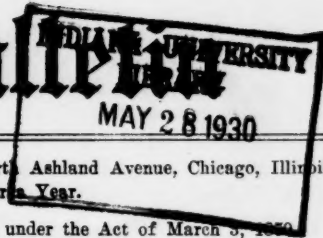


The Classical Bulletin



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Vol. VI

JUNE, 1930

No. 9

News from Nemi

Out at Lake Nemi, eighteen miles south of Rome, the Italian government is still engaged on salvage operations that began five centuries ago, and at this writing very much remains to be done. At first glance it is not easy to appreciate the difficulties that have so unduly protracted the job. Lake Nemi is small, less than a mile across at its widest point, and comparatively shallow, having a maximum depth of a hundred feet. And even though it is a thousand feet above sea-level, it is shielded from the winds that sweep the Alban hills by the precipitous, heavily-wooded sides of the volcanic crater in which it is set. With reason the Romans called it *Speculum Dianae*. Of the so-called galleys of Caligula, which the Italians have been trying to recover, one lies forty feet below the surface, the other sixty-five. A situation hardly comparable to that, for example, which confronts the salvagers of the bullion-laden *Islander*, buried three hundred and sixty feet deep off the Alaskan coast. Yet the problem of the ships of Nemi has defied the efforts of Italian engineers since 1446.

I cannot spare the space to describe in detail the attempts made to raise the ship nearest shore by Leon Battista Alberti in 1446, Francesco De Marchi in 1535, and Annesio Fusconi in 1827. Their means were substantially the same, a derrick mounted on a raft; and their results agreed in being disastrous for the ship. The great iron hooks they had attached to the hull tore out quantities of timber, but the mud-imbedded hulk did not budge. And small wonder; it is two hundred feet long, with a beam of sixty-two feet, and is moreover of extraordinarily ponderous construction. The engineers now working on the ship estimate its displacement at over a thousand tons. Fusconi's raft, the largest of the three, measured sixty by twenty-five feet; evidently he believed that the tail can wag the dog. He did, however, have the somewhat meagre satisfaction of seeing the dandies of Rome sporting canes and snuff-boxes fashioned out of wood he had taken from the "ship of Tiberius." (The present attribution of the ships to Caligula is largely based on the evidence of a leaden water pipe, now exhibited in one of the museums on the shore of the Lake and bearing the inscription CAI. CAESARIS AUG. GERMANICI. As to why he built them, there is already a plain and a fancy assortment of hypotheses to choose from. Let it suffice to observe that, as long as, for want of contradictory evidence, we must accept the testimony of Seneca, Suetonius, and

Tacitus as to Caligula's character and habits, it is not the most pleasant pastime in the world grubbing about in his revolting history, trying to explain this mysterious phase of it. So let us return to the facts.)

In 1895 Eliseo Borghi, an antiquary, continued the dismemberment of the more accessible ship. His findings fill a large room in the National Museum at Rome and include the now familiar bronzes: a head of Medusa, two wolf and two lion heads. These bronzes are in perfect condition, so perfect, in fact, that when they were first exhibited, it was whispered that they had been "planted." There is husbandry of that sort in Italy, to be sure; but the discovery of similar bronzes near the ship just recently seems to establish the authenticity of Borghi's find. But it soon became evident that he was intent on bringing the ship up piecemeal. So the government intervened, stopped the work, and confiscated the bronzes, timbers, marbles, mosaics, and metal fittings that are seen today in the museum.

By that time the situation had assumed the nature of a challenge; so the government ordered a complete survey to be made by Vittorio Malfatti. He reported that the only way to recover the ships was to lower the level of the Lake. No further action, however, was taken at the time. It remained for Mussolini to accept the challenge of the ships a quarter of a century later. He attacked the problem with the energy he brings to every question involving the honor of Italy. He himself declared that such a question existed at Nemi. In his speech of April 9th, 1927, before the *Società di Storia Patria*, he described it as *una questione insieme di scienza e di decoro nazionale, un debito di onore verso la cultura classica e verso la dignità del nostro Paese*. Thereafter things began to happen. A group of power companies offered to lower the level of the Lake at their own expense, making use of the ancient *emissario*. Their offer was accepted January 3d, 1928, and the repair and enlargement of the *emissario* was begun.

This artificial outlet deserves a fuller description than I can give it here. Built not later than the fourth century B. C., it is, in its kind, quite as remarkable a revelation of the Roman constructive genius as the ships themselves. Nero's famous tunnel at Lake Avernus cannot compare with it. The *emissario* proper is a tunnel bored through a mile of mountain, and was built to carry the overflow of the Lake down to Lake Ariccia, far below and nearer the Campagna. Think of the years of patient and painful labor such tunneling must have

cost; at times it pierces strata of *selce*, the basaltic lava so hard that the Romans chose it for their roads. Including the canal through the now dry Lake bottom called Valle Ariceia and another *emissario* leading from that, the artificial outlet used in the recent lowering of the Lake is over three miles long. It empties into the *Incastro*, the stream called in ancient times the *Numicius*, and mentioned in *Livy* i, 2, as the scene of Aeneas's disappearance. *Situs est super flumen Numicium*.

Using pneumatic drills and explosives, a force of one hundred men worked day and night for four months to enlarge and reconstruct the *emissario*. At its mouth a concrete receiving-basin was built, and four pumps were installed on the shore. The combination of pumps and *emissario* had a discharge capacity of 1500 litres per second. October 28th the pumps were set in motion by the *Duce* himself: thenceforward it was only a question of time, or so it seemed. March 29th, 1929, the stern of the first ship appeared; September 27th the whole ship was visible. Thirty billion litres of water had been discharged, the level of the Lake had been lowered forty-five feet, and its area decreased one-fifth.

I do not entirely agree with the wide-spread expressions of disappointment that greeted the appearance of the first ship. The general public, of course, could hardly be blamed for feeling the way it did: the sensational press had given it to expect a magic galley with slaves still at the oars, sails spread, and banners flying. But even a slight knowledge of the history of the sunken ships would have corrected such an illusion. The authorities, for example, were not disappointed: Malfatti's report had shown them what to expect. And what they actually found is far from being negligible. Corrado Ricci, the excavator of the Market of Trajan, calls it the world's greatest relic of classical antiquity. I suspect that those who circulated the first unfavorable reports had been content to remain on the shore, from which, to be sure, all they saw, almost a block away, was what appeared to be a ship *in fieri*, whose construction had not reached beyond the water-line. I have seen tourists stop on the road, stare curiously at the distant hulk, and turn back up the hill, satisfied, I suppose, that there was "nothing to see." But for anyone with a moiety of imagination and even a slight knowledge of and interest in classical life, there is very much to see. But he must cross the expanse of Lake bottom on duckboards and inspect the craft at close range to appreciate fully what an immense contribution it is to our knowledge of the greatest builders in the ancient world.

After the liberation of the first ship the pumping continued. Great expectations centered about the second ship. I do not want to merit the very accusation I directed against the advance agents of the first ship, but it must be admitted that even the officials entertained sanguine hopes, and those based on definite data. Nearly all the destructive salvage work of the past had been directed against the ship nearest shore, for the sufficient reason that the other lay twenty-five feet deeper. Hence it is supposed to be in better condition. Furthermore, it is twenty-five feet longer than the first, and its beam

is wider by sixteen feet. What is more important, its recovery is expected to reveal many structural features not found in the first. While the recovered ship seems to have resembled a glorified house-boat, permanently anchored at the shore, (parts of a permanent landing stage have been found), it is claimed that the other was a veritable cruising galley. At least divers have reported apertures for a bank of oars, which is a feature not found in the first boat recovered.

The only bronze taken from the second ship is the famous augural hand, now part of the collection in the National Museum. True to the spirit of the ancient Romans, the investigators invoked it as an omen of success. But omens, even in Rome, have ever been deceptive When I visited the Lake, December 28th, the highest point of the second ship was less than four feet below the surface. The omens, it seemed, would soon be fulfilled. When I returned March 3d of this year, with the assurance based on home-made calculations that I should see the Italian tricolor waving proudly above projecting timbers, I was surprised to find no sign of the second ship. Nor was that the only surprise. A crew of thirty men was busy draining the space around the first boat, which, when I saw it in December, was about fifty feet from the water's edge. The cause of the situation was evident enough. The pumps had stopped, and the Lake, swollen by heavy rains (and perhaps by springs or a hidden inlet) was steadily, however imperceptibly, advancing to regain possession of the prey it had lost. How far it will have reached when these lines are read, I cannot say. Upon inquiry I found that the pumps had been incapacitated when the pontoons on which they were mounted had sunk. What they were doing on pontoons requires explanation. In the first stages of the operations, the pumps had been mounted on the shore. As the water receded, they were set up on new foundations further down. But frequent slides and the insecurity of the position (hindering the perfect functioning of the centrifugal pumps) made a new arrangement imperative. The difficulty was met by mounting the whole pumping unit on pontoons, so that it could descend with the Lake, while connected by large flexible tubes of reinforced rubber with the receiving basin at the mouth of the *emissario*. By some misadventure, whose nature I have not been able to determine (my informant chose to be non-committal), the pontoons filled and sank. The pumps have been sent to Milan for overhauling, and operations will not be resumed before the middle of May.

Of course the recovery of the second ship is inevitable; but for numerous reasons the incident is unfortunate. For one thing, hundreds of summer visitors will be disappointed, and besides (a point not inconsiderable here in Italy), the complete justification of the whole enterprise is delayed another four months. Even with regard to the first ship the accident has caused inconvenience and delay. Some of the most important discoveries have been made in the mud surrounding the ship. The five bronze animal heads, for example, were dug out of ten feet of mud near the stern of the ship.

Before the stoppage of the pumps, no excavations had been made around the prow, towards the water's edge, though valuable discoveries were expected at that point. That work is now postponed indefinitely, and all efforts are being concentrated on draining away the seepage from the advancing Lake. Yet even this melancholy state of affairs, I am happy to say, does not preclude the most pleasant surprises. February 10th of this year a bronze was dug up that rivals any yet discovered. It is a so-called "double-herm," i. e. a squared post, tapering towards the bottom and terminating at the top in a double-faced bust, said to represent Silenus the satyr as a youth and as an old man. Presumably it was a baluster of the deck-railing. Like all the other bronzes it is almost perfectly preserved and, in the temporary museum on the shore, shares the chief honors with a bronze valve which experts claim could not be improved upon in a modern machine shop. These two exhibits, it seems to me, embody the double appeal of "Caligula's galleys"—to the artist and the scientist; the fact is, the engineers are as enthusiastic about them as the classical archaeologist.

Rome, Italy

EDWARD A. CONWAY, S. J.

Vergilian Gems of Thought

The subjoined list of quotations from the *Aeneid*, which are the lines most frequently quoted in English literature and which every classical student is expected to recognize when he meets them, are being specially emphasized in our Vergil class, both throughout the semester and in the final examination. The student is called upon to explain their setting in the poem and give a fair translation of them. The following may serve as a specimen of what may be called a satisfactory answer of a student in the examination.

Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis

Tempus eget.

"This crisis does not call for help or assistance such as you can give."

"These words occur in the second book where Aeneas is narrating the fall of Troy. They were addressed by Heecuba to her aged and feeble husband Priam, who in despair had armed himself with the armor of his youth."

In the following list of references, only the first and last words are given in each case.

Book I. 11: tantaene . . . irae. 21: hinc . . . Parcas. 33: tanta . . . gentem. 90: intonare . . . aether. 136: post . . . luetis. - 198: O socii . . . finem. 203: forsan . . . iuvabit. 207: durate . . . secundis. 278: his . . . dedi. 282: Romanos . . . togatam. 364: dux femina facti. 461: sunt hic . . . tangunt. 574: Tros . . . agetur. 630: non . . . disco.

Book II. 5: quaeque . . . fui. 49: quidquid . . . ferentes. 65: crimine . . . omnes. 130: assensere . . . tulere. 274: ei mihi . . . Achilli. 316: furor . . . armis. 324: venit . . . Teucrorum. 354: una

. . . salutem. 367: quondam . . . virtus. 521: non . . . eget. 646: facilis iactura sepulchri.

Book III. 56: quid . . . fames. 489: O mihi . . . imago. 606: si . . . iuvabit. 658: monstrum . . . ademptum.

Book IV. 174: fama . . . eundo. 624: nullus . . . nepotesque. 653: vixi . . . peregi.

Book V. 6: furens quid femina possit. 137: intenti . . . cupido. 196: extremos . . . nefas. 230: vitamque . . . videntur.

Book VI. 95: tu ne . . . ito. 126: facilis . . . labor est. 376: desine . . . precando. 569: distulit . . . mortem. 851: tu regere . . . superbos. 882: heu . . . munere.

Book VII. 98: externi . . . videbunt. 312: flectere . . . movebo.

Book VIII. 451: gemit . . . massam. 596: quadrupedante . . . campum. 698: omnigenumque . . . Anubis.

Book IX. 435: purpureus . . . gravantur. 503: at tuba . . . remugit. 641: macte . . . astra.

Book X. 501: nescia . . . secundis.

A line from Propertius:

"Cedite, Romani scriptores; cedite Graii;
Nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade."

St. Louis, Mo.

OTTO J. KUHNMUENCH, S. J.

Book Review

The Greek Fathers, by James Marshall Campbell, Associate Professor of Greek and Latin in The Catholic University of America. No. 34 of *Our Debt to Greece and Rome* Series. Longmans Green and Co., New York, \$1.75.

We should be doing an injustice to Prof. Campbell if we were to accept his volume of 155 duodecimo pages as a Manual of Patristic Literature and to contrast it, for instance, with Rauschen-Wittig's *Grundriss der Patrologie*, now in general use in Germany. While the "Grundriss" is intended for advanced study, and therefore packed with detailed information, Prof. Campbell's volume addresses itself to the general reader who prefers broad strokes to minute touches. With these limitations imposed upon him by the programme of the "Our Debt to Greece and Rome" Series, the author has succeeded admirably: he eschews smaller issues and contents himself with summary exposition of the larger questions.

A general introduction discusses the relations between Hellenism and Christianity in the first five centuries of our era. Then follows the longest chapter containing a succinct survey, not of all Greek Fathers, but of such as the author considers representative of their class, beginning with a brief reference to the Apostolic Fathers and ending with St. John Damascene. The remaining chapters purport to deal with the influence exercised by the Greek Fathers especially on Western Christendom. The final chapter (VIII) gives a summary of acquired results.

J. D.

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Vol. VI

June, 1930

No. 9

Editorial

Jesuit teachers of the classics in the Middle West will again convene in Chicago, when the Missouri Province Classical Association holds its annual meeting at Loyola University, August 16-20. The Vergilian Bimillennium has not been overlooked in the shaping of the program, and a repetition of the enthusiasm of last summer's sessions is confidently looked forward to.

It is impossible to arrange a convention program in which all the contributions will carry a universal appeal. Some papers will naturally appeal more to high-school teachers, others to college teachers. But the Latin course is one, and we must see it whole, before we can hope to do justice to our particular part of it. Only that high-school teacher who realizes that in teaching Caesar, Cicero and Vergil, he is, however early in the course, already teaching great literature, has a right to teach Latin at all. Only that college teacher who is perfectly satisfied with the classes which are his yearly inheritance, has a right to refuse attention to high-school programs and problems. Each is a teacher of Latin, and should hold nothing that is Latin foreign to his interests.

With the chance exception of Cicero, Vergil is the only author who holds a fixed place in both high-school and college Latin curriculum. Those who will meet to do him honor next August at Chicago are teachers from both these departments. Is it too much to hope that the magic of the Mantuan will, on this auspicious occasion, not only inspire all with a greater and more sincere enthusiasm for the *Aeneid*, but also weld together those

whose immediate interests lie in the high school and college respectively, and seal the compact with an *esprit-de-corps* that will endure?

During the present year, when the whole literary world has, with never a discordant note, been singing the praises of Vergil, the poet of the human heart, the thought has no doubt crossed the minds of many of our readers, "Is it not to be regretted that to Vergil was denied the boon granted to many a later artist, of being able to join his melodious cadences with the *Gloria in excelsis* of Bethlehem, of interpreting the loving smile of the Madonna, or of mingling his tears with those of Magdalen on Calvary?" We need not however confine ourselves to mere conjecture in regard to how Vergil would have treated such themes, for at least a score of early Christian poets, lovers both of Vergil and of Christ, men too of no mean literary genius, have rehearsed the story of the Redemption in measures that the author of the Fourth Eclogue would not have despised. Too long have the songs of these Christian poets been hidden in inaccessible folios; but thanks to the zeal and devotion of a present-day priest and professor of Latin, they have at last been placed at our disposal. We should like to recommend to our readers that they spend part of their vacation leisure in the company of some of Vergil's most promising disciples, as presented to us by the Rev. Otto J. Kuhnmuench, S. J., of St. Louis University in his *Early Christian Latin Poets* (Loyola University Press, 1929, Pp. xiv+472, \$2.40). We can promise teachers of Latin that they will meet with many a choice passage which they will wish to mark for use in next year's Vergil class.

Intercollegiate Latin Contest

The Intercollegiate Latin Contest for the colleges of the Missouri and Chicago Provinces of the Society of Jesus was held this year on April 9. The Latin-English paper was a fragment of *Livy 120*, preserved by the Elder Seneca in his *Suasoriae*, 7; the English-Latin paper was a passage based on *Cicero, in Verrem, Act. 2, lib. 2, 2 and 3*. Following are the winners of the contest:

1. Albert Worst, St. Xavier College, Cincinnati, O.
2. Albert G. Muckerheide, St. Xavier College, Cincinnati, O.
3. John Winstel, St. Xavier College, Cincinnati, O.
4. Edmund Smolik, John Carroll University, Cleveland, O.
5. Louis Kutz, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.
6. Oliver S. Senn, St. John's College, Toledo, O.
7. John Hritzu, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.
8. Craig La Driene, University of Detroit, Detroit, Mich.
9. Jerome J. Valade, St. John's College, Toledo, O.
10. Roy Boedeker, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.

Adolescent Psychology Applied to the Teaching of High School Latin (II)

We may now explore some prominent sources of adolescent interest. The first of these is the heightening of sense appeal. Gray sings of the rustic poet born to blush unseen because of a lack of powers of expression. Similarly the clearest mind may fail with others, if it overlooks those various aids, as charting, diagramming, outlining, illustrating, finding analogies, etc., all of which make thought externally visible, make thought so clear that it can actually be seen. St. Thomas defended the proposition that vivid, definite sense impressions wonderfully facilitate human learning. It is good policy to stir as many senses as possible to activity. For instance, seldom see or write a word without hearing it, or pronouncing it, at least subvocally. The adolescent will willingly enlist in the cause of training his senses to concentration upon one object, to discrimination, quickness, and precision of observation: the scout's eye to spot significant things. Finally, the importance of sense appeal appears from a study of the factors of inattention. Few students are positively unwilling to listen to the teacher; their inattention is often traceable to excessive sensory energy, to the struggle of many objects luring their attention and goading their imaginations. The teacher simply must get into and stay in and dominate the youth's sensory focus. This mastery over straying attention need not call for a display of great physical energy; the quiet voice and the attitude of the magician should work just as well as noise and circus performances.

Conflict, too, within reasonable limits, provokes interest. Latin offers the boy abundant opportunities to train himself in control, in tackling difficulties with pertinacity, and in acquiring a habit of doggedness in his emotional and intellectual struggles. Could we make the boy feel that an assignment is a challenge to his self-respect, to his abilities of mind and character, to his experiences, ingenuity, perception, decision to conquer the challenge, and fidelity to duty, then his coöperation with us might be more whole-hearted.

Among many such opportunities for conflict, let us here mention Socratic questioning. A little adroit questioning helps the boy to unravel the snares of translation; and surely such training in self-reliance is much preferable to feeding him the translation. You tease him with the question; he must work, he must think, he must be active to answer. And when all is said, the boy really must train and develop himself, while you but guide him; the real activity in classroom learning is the activity inside the boy's brain and soul. Another such example of challenge to conflict occurs in parsing assignments. We say, "Parse *regat*, line 9; *amaret*, line 12," etc. It would be better to say, "There are three purpose clauses in this passage. Find and parse them."

To be sure, the conflicts and challenges proposed must not discourage the boy, but rather give him the joy of success. Really, we must be much more careful to prove

to the youth that he is succeeding, not only in that general success indicated by good grades, but also in particular skills. Parsing and theme work are deductive, abstract, syllogistic reasoning; yet when the boy entered high school, he was practically incapable of such reasoning. Here is something in which he has achieved a power most useful to him in later life, as abundant stories of men who succeeded because they had a deductive turn of mind will prove. Point out to the boy this fact, and in detail. Again one may test out his ability to derive words or to discriminate the meanings of vaguely known words, as, e.g., between aqueduct and viaduct, reflect and deflect, compose and repose. Herein, the boy sees concretely that his effort at Latin is repaying him in practical affairs. What light does his Latin (or Greek) throw on physical notions and the purposes of physical apparatus: electrical attraction and repulsion, humidity, density, resonator, barometer, thermometer, and hundreds more? Is not gravitation a misnomer?

A last stronghold of interest, our emotions and ideals which so profoundly affect each individual, deserves a little consideration. Scientific study shows that adolescent emotional life is very rich, though unharnessed; that aesthetic objects compel attention; that intellectual insight is growing apace; that human personalities and fair ideals strongly influence the adolescent; and that the boy for many reasons is now making some serious essays in the canny art of estimating human character. Latin teachers must both train and utilize this fertile emotional and idealistic side of the maturing boy. For we may well maintain that whoever is seeking emotion, the inspiration of personality, and introduction to the critique of ideals of character, may find all these in the characters, scenes, motives displayed in the writings of Caesar, Cicero, and Vergil. Let us try to be specific in treating this difficult topic.

One of the finest things about boys (and akin to their idealism) is their love of adventure. Caesar is one of the world's greatest adventurers. The second book of the Gallic War, over which so much time is spent, is full of thrills. At the end of an English reading of parts of this book, a football tackle spontaneously yelled out, "Read us more of that stuff." He was complimenting Caesar. Now, the twenty-fifth chapter is both the most adventurous in the book and possibly the most difficult to translate. A previous awakening of the emotion of adventure certainly will send the boy hurdling over the difficulties of the text. Aeneas, also, is an adventurer with a divine mission.

Related to this love of adventure is the love of ingenuity, surprises, and bold strokes. Again, Caesar the wary politician repeatedly shows himself a man of most rapid, almost impulsive action. In the desperate fight with the Nervii he risked his life to save his career, when he wrested the sword from a legionary and himself pitched into the fray. That act put glow into his soldiers, and even today affects his youthful readers.

Cicero, too, swept Catiline and his senatorial partisans off their feet by his fierce, public, personal invective in the first Catilinian speech. The mocker left whipped. How different this act of Cicero from the deliberate, veiled sarcasm and the quasi-impersonal address of legislative bodies.

Furthermore, boys being idealists and romanticists, idolize the men who conceive and realize ambitions. Devote some time to the consideration that Caesar not only dreamed to be master of the world, but that he took practical measures to actuate these ideals, and labored long, doggedly, and through much peril to fulfill the ideal. Cicero's craving for glory gave him the courage for the task of repressing Catiline's conspiracy. This gives an opportunity for the discussion of what constitutes true success, true ambition, true practical idealism. Did Caesar really aim to serve the state or to make the state a tool to his own fame? Cicero in *De Senectute* is the polished man of the world. Here we can discuss the ideal of the gentleman, and the Christian ideal of character. It would be foolish to forego all these splendid opportunities. Thus we stress the thought content of the text; we teach boys to think while they are reading, to let reading affect their living, to measure others' ideals and more clearly shape their own ambitions.

But if students would thus enter the heart of their reading, they must enter into sympathetic company with Caesar's and Cicero's own minds. Caesar, though the politician, exhibits a charming candor. For he does not belittle his foes, nor conceal his own mistakes; he generously praises his subordinates and genuinely admires much Celtic character, even while as a Roman he deplores Celtic lack of political solidarity. After all, such sympathy with Caesar is wholesome, for his cause represents the cause of Gaul's best progress. In like manner, the boy should share some of Cicero's tremendous emotional reaction against Catiline, in his love of stability and of the old order, in his fear of personal danger, in the insult to his own leadership contained in Catiline's threat of mob-rule, in the fear that his name be held abject among men because under him Rome was burned by gangsters. Boys feel somewhat similarly towards big-city gangsters, political cheats, escaped prisoners, Bolsheviks, etc.

The subject is very vast. Psychological knowledge, however, gives much promise of elaborating for us a sound system, of more interesting, and therefore more successful, teaching. We should aim to moderate thoroughness, to reduce drill by intensifying it, and to criticize our own teaching by these pivotal principles of increasing sense-appeal, of opening up opportunities for conflict and success, and of taking into consideration the boy's emotions and ideals.

Cincinnati, O.

BERNARD J. WUELLNER, S. J.

Just as Latin is the most powerful language for explaining English, so Greek is the most powerful language for explaining Latin. The final meaning of the Latin tree-root is found in Greek.—Andrew F. West.

American Humanism and the Classics

The year 1929 may some day turn out to be a significant one for the cause of classical education in this country. During it there came into prominence a movement, known as American Humanism, which seems to contain in it the seeds of much promise for the restoration of the humanities. Under the leadership of Mr. Irving Babbitt of Harvard University and Mr. Paul Elmer More of Princeton University, the movement emerged from the unobtrusive existence it had enjoyed for some years, with a brilliant attack upon that philosophy which, since the beginning of the 19th Century, has operated so effectively against many of the really valuable things in Western civilization, including the intelligent study of Latin and Greek.

For a year now the humanists have been pinning the blame for the current confusion in art, education, and life on the disciples of Rousseauan romanticism and pseudo-science, who have definitely broken with the past. They have pleaded for a critical re-estimation of the rejected wisdom of the ages. And they have done this well. But what is more important, they have done it in leading articles in some of the best-known magazines in the country. This is what has given the whole affair the dignity of a movement.

One of the most significant gestures of the humanists, as far as the classics are concerned, has been the attack on electivism. In the *Forum* for January, 1929, there appeared an article entitled *President Eliot and American Education*, by Mr. Babbitt, in which we had the spectacle of the best-known member of the Harvard faculty severely criticising the educational philosophy of that university's best-known president. The article in its tone and general arguments recalls a similar assault upon Pres. Eliot's electivism made exactly 29 years previously by the Rev. Timothy Brosnahan, S. J., then professor of ethics at Woodstock College. A comparison of these two able critiques brings out several interesting facts, one of the most important of which seems to be this, that the new thing about American Humanism is not its doctrines, but its superb mode of attack and the wide attention it is receiving. Its opinions are those that have been held by a faithful minority all during the ascendancy of the so-called modern mind.

Fr. Brosnahan's critique, it will be recalled, was provoked by an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1899, written by Pres. Eliot. The Harvard president attacked the Jesuit college curriculum for prescribing uniform studies, especially as regards the classics. "Nothing but an unhesitating belief in the divine wisdom of such prescriptions can justify them," declared Pres. Eliot. "For no human wisdom is equal to contriving a prescribed course of studies equally good for even two children of the same family between the ages of eight and eighteen. Direct revelation from on high would be the only satisfactory basis for a uniform prescribed school system." Fr. Brosnahan accused the Harvard president of muddy philosophizing. He insisted that he was over-stressing the importance of individual differences in children and was neglecting their more important essential

likenesses. "Replying merely on the light of reason," he declared, "its desertion (the educational theory that puts the major stress on the common qualities in human nature) universally in this country would, in the judgment of the Jesuits, be disastrous. It would tend to lower the standards of education, to lessen the intrinsic value of a college degree, to give one-sided information, to unfit men for effective university work."

It is the concrete and calamitous fulfillment of this prophecy in America twenty-nine years later that inspired Mr. Babbitt's article. "The idea of liberal education in America," he says, "is in danger of perishing in the midst of a general bewilderment. President Eliot's educational theory which exalted the variable over the constant elements in human nature has been a great contributing factor." He contends, as did Fr. Brosnahan, that this theory is fundamentally false. But whereas Fr. Brosnahan in 1899 was obliged to condemn it on *a priori* grounds, Mr. Babbitt is able to attack it from a pragmatic viewpoint. He declares that the doctrine has received "the most formidable of refutations, that of facts." His analysis of the philosophy of electivism is illuminating. He says:

Pres. Eliot's attack, in the name of electivism, on the traditional college curriculum will be found to involve a clash between a familiar type of naturalistic philosophy and the wisdom of the ages. . . . This philosophy culminates in a doctrine of progress that would seem to be in serious conflict with the wisdom of the ages; for it is plain that there can be no such wisdom without the assumption in some form of a core of normal human experience that is set above the shifting tide of circumstance. The progress proclaimed by the naturalists, on the contrary, is to be achieved, not by transcending the phenomenal flux but by a surrender to it. . . . The belief in progress in its most naive form is still held by multitudes especially in America. It may be doubted, however, whether in the future anyone of a distinction comparable to that of Pres. Eliot will be able to hold it with the same bland confidence.

This "wisdom of the ages" from which Pres. Eliot is accused of separating himself is not, as might be assumed, a vague and emotional tag in Mr. Babbitt's vocabulary. He defines it with precision. The great minds of the past, he says, have agreed in maintaining that man needs to be disciplined in his natural self to some objective standard. There is an essential dualism in his nature; one part of him is expansive, volatile, unstable, seeking to seize upon every object that pleases with enthusiastic indiscrimination. The other part of him is a source of great stability; it seeks to know the truth below the shifting phenomenon, to compare, to discriminate, and then with the aid of the will to inhibit the out-push of desire along one line and release it along another, in accordance with judgments made as to the relative goodness of the objects desired. The important problem in education, as well as in the whole of life, is to make this expansive element subordinate to the stable part, the intellect. To do this requires training both of the intellect and of the will, and such training is a prerequisite to balanced emotional development.

Pres. Eliot, as Mr. Babbitt points out, in denying the existence of such a problem was forced back upon the Rousseauian theory that man is born naturally good and

becomes perfect by following his instincts. The necessity of disciplining the natural self he felt to be repressive, and for this he wished to substitute full and free expression. The elective system was designed to let every youth develop a certain innate gift he was supposed to possess and in which he was to suffer no contradiction. The effort he was to put forth along the lines of his temperamental bias was to make for his own happiness and was finally to be pressed into the service of humanity.

It was Fr. Brosnahan's criticism of Pres. Eliot, too, that he ignored the problem involved in the dualism of man's nature. He agreed with him that the emotional and temperamental differences in youths should be taken into account; but that the development of these differences should be made the whole stuff of education, he was unwilling to grant.

I have dwelt somewhat at length on the criticism offered by these men on this particular phase of electivism because it seems to lie at the root of the whole matter of the modern rejection of the classics, and to explain the relative failure of a well-organized body of classical teachers to restore the humanities to their proper place in the curriculum. For it is useless to go into detail about the disciplinary value of the classics, when it is not admitted that man needs discipline. It is without point to elaborate on the treasure of wisdom and culture locked up in the Greek and Latin authors, in the face of a philosophy that declares that time is progress and looks with benign condescension on the products of ages less advanced in the evolutionary scale than itself. The humanists, following Fr. Brosnahan, have hit upon the real and most fruitful state of the question. For the argument, at bottom, is not about the relative value of economics and the classics in the curriculum, but whether educators will continue to be dominated by a sentimental-utilitarian philosophy, based on an inadequate and un-scientific concept of human nature, or will return to an educational philosophy which is founded on a concept of man, psychologically correct and confirmed by revelation.

Mr. Babbitt thinks that there is no compromise between these two philosophies and that those who "think themselves moderate are in fact only muddled." His article closes with an exhortation to American educators to leave off following the ghost of Pres. Eliot:

The present need seems to be for educational leaders whose first aim is quality, in the teaching body, students, and above all in the subjects taught. Subjects are not arbitrary. The reasons for them are deeply rooted in the facts of history and human nature. This program should be of especial interest to small colleges. The new education requires enormously elaborate and expensive apparatus. This elaborateness is encouraged by the prime emphasis of the utilitarian on the progress of humanity through the coöperation of a multitude of specialists, as well as by the prime emphasis of the sentimentalist on innate gifts and their right to gratification. The small college that accepts this department-store conception of education is at once put at a hopeless disadvantage.

St. Louis, Mo.

CALVERT ALEXANDER, S. J.

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